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EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF THE AMBASSADOR

San Salvador, El Salvador

February 8, 1982

Dear Diego:

I have your letter of January 27, concerning the Sullivan case. Unfortunately the material you referred to in your letter was not enclosed as indicated.

I agree that our staffs can coordinate better and I think this can be accomplished by not using the telephone. I notice from the file that problems always seem to arise when communications are over the phone. I understand that now all communications are being handled by cable and things appear to be on track. The two incidents mentioned in your letter are good examples of the problems caused by using the telephone.

I understand that the Emergency Center telephonically requested on Thursday, January 14, excerpts pertaining to the Sullivan case of my lengthy and far ranging January 12 press interview. The Consular Section immediately relayed this request to the PAO's office and cabled the material as soon as it was available Monday, January 18. As might be expected, messages passed by word of mouth easily become distorted and delayed especially in a high pressure operations post and there also appears to have been some confusion about the state of play among offices on the Washington end.

Confusion again ensued in the wake of telephone calls to us about what the PAO said regarding alleged calls to the Embassy from the writers of two of the letters. The CA duty officer called and asked us if we had received a call from someone claiming to be the writer of the December 1981 letter. We answered that no such call had been received. The next day the Emergency Center called and asked whether the PAO had made any statements about the Embassy receiving calls from one of the letters writers. We checked and informed the Emergency Center that the PAO may have in the context of a longer discussion mentioned that we received a response from someone claiming to be the writer of the September 1981 letter. This was followed up by a call from Deputy Assistant Secretary Lane to the DCM with a rather different version of the telephone calls. As the DCM explained to Mr. Lane our staffs probably could have avoided all this confusion if they had cabled their inquiries and responses at the outset.

The Honorable
Diego C. Asencio
Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs,
Department of State,
Washington, D.C.

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I am in complete agreement that close coordination between our staffs and accurate timely exchange of information is necessary if we wish to succesfully convince the family and Congresswoman Roukema that everything reasonable is being done to solve the mystery of the Sullivan disappearance. By using telegrams we can ensure the timely and accurate exchange of information. I am enclosing a copy of our telegram summarizing our cable reports on the case for your use. Jim Ward's recent visit here was very successful and will ensure closer and better coordination between our staffs.

We appreciate all the support and assistance you and your colleagues in Consular Affairs are providing. Please let me know if there is anything we can do on our end to better manage this issue.

Sincerely,

Deane R. Hinton

Enclosure: as stated

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